

## **MINUTES**

### **Research Strategic Advisory Council**

Thursday, March 12, 2015

3:00pm – 4:00pm

302 AAB

**Members Present:** Andrea Giuffrida, Reto Asmis, Michael Beckstead, Carrie Jo Braden, Robert Clark, Christopher Green, Erzsebet Kokovay, Alexander Pertsemlidis and Rajeshwar Tekmal

**Members Absent:** Ian Thompson, Paul Fitzpatrick, Thomas Oates, Kyumin Whang, Maureen Simmonds and Paula Shireman

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Minutes from 12/11/14 approved by Council.

### **Bioinformatics development**

Dr. Pertsemlidis noted that bioinformatics is critical to the research mission of the HSC. Our researchers are frustrated because they can't get results out of next generation sequencing experiments since they cannot find the right expertise on campus or mechanisms to tap into that expertise somewhere else. Multidisciplinary experts in bioinformatics are in high demand and short supply. The HSC only has a few experts on campus and no institutional core function that addresses this need.

There have been several recommendations for investment in bioinformatics from the University Core Research Facility (UCRF) Committee, the VPR's external advisory panel on core facilities and the VPR's faculty advisory team on Biocomputing. A possible solution combines investments and partnerships. Specifically, bioinformatics support to the research domain would require investment into highly skilled personnel to include two full time experts and one director (30% effort). The full time experts should be fully funded for the first two years and then at 50% in the followings years (the remaining portion of their salary being covered by revenues received from services and grant applications).

This new "core" should leverage local infrastructure and the Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC) in Austin. TACC is one of the top super computers in the world and is an available resource for those in need of high performance computing and large storage. Dr. Pertsemlidis added that UT Austin has put together a bioinformatics team that includes Hans Hoffmann, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Computational Biology and Bioinformatics, Scott Hunicke-Smith, Ph.D., Director of Diagnostics and Genomic Sequencing and 5 bioinformatics team members. The idea would be for the UT Austin group and the proposed UTHSCSA group communicate on a regular basis to collaborate on projects.

Proposed operations for a HSC bioinformatics group may include:

- Deploy on existing projects: embedding someone in a lab for a short but productive period of time (fee for service).
- Build and test general-purpose analytical pipelines
- Contribute to grant writing: reflected in % effort
- Present educational workshops
- Consult on projects: short-term, walk-in advisory

Anticipated benefits:

- critical mass of expertise
- more competitive grant proposals
- improved local skills through training, teaching and transfer
- capture of workflows for re-use
- appropriate distribution of personnel costs
- improved ties to UT component institutions

--potential for growth and improvement

Proposed costs will be higher in Yr 1 & Yr 2 but decline in Yr 3 & Yr 4 as revenues should be coming in.

**Followup:** The committee recommended Dr. Pertsemlidis to contact UT Austin for their willingness to partner with us and present follow-up at the next meeting.

### **Performance Evaluation Form for Faculty/Researchers**

The McKinsey firm recommended to harmonize the evaluation of all HSC Faculty/Researchers as there is a lot of discrepancy about metrics and expectations across the Departments. Dr. Giuffrida reviewed several Faculty/Researcher performance evaluation sheets collected from different HSC Departments with the assistance of the RSAC members. The goal was to identify key evaluation criteria and make recommendations for Dr. Mok's office, which is ultimately responsible to develop a university-wide evaluation process. The RSAC committee reviewed and discussed the available evaluation forms, which ranged from streamlined subjective models to more "quantitative" ones adopting rating scales. The latter forms included items such as academic accomplishments (i.e. publications, presentations, teaching, service), grant funding, student mentoring, etc.

After discussion, the committee members agreed that the purpose of the Faculty/Researchers evaluation should be to improve the performance of the investigator; they also agreed that it is up to the respective Department Chairs (or designated reviewer) to decide about the format of the evaluation form, as long as it includes minimal requirements, such as grant funding, publications, career development of trainees and academic responsibilities (teaching, research, service). Performance evaluations should be completed on an annual basis.

**Followup:** Dr. Giuffrida will create a recommendation for review/approval by the committee that will then be submitted to Dr. Mok.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.